

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Sessions wrongly maligned

In March of 1981, 19-year-old Michael Donald, a black man, was walking down a street in Mobile, Alabama, when he was accosted at random by Henry Francis Hays and his under-age accomplice, James Knowles.

The two Ku Klux Klansman ? Hays was the son of Alabama Klan leader Bennie Hays ? dragged Donald across the street, strangled him, slit his throat and left him hanging in a tree, a response to the elder Hays' order to ?show Klan strength in Alabama.?

At the time, the KKK was a potent force throughout the South, particularly in Alabama, and African Americans had real cause to worry about them.

But in the Donald murder, a white Alabama prosecutor named Jeff Sessions not only prosecuted the case but insisted on going after the death penalty ? making it the first execution in Alabama for a white-on-black crime since 1913 ? which led to a subsequent civil jury award of \$7 million against the Klan, an order which bankrupted the Alabama KKK and effectively ended their long-running reign of terror in that state.

This same prosecutor, Jeff Sessions, also filed several cases in his state to desegregate schools in Alabama ? remember then governor George Wallace standing at the front door of the University of Alabama trying to block blacks from entering? ? and years later, when he was elected the state's attorney-general, he pursued the Hays case to make sure the killer was, in fact, executed. He was, in 1997.

And so it was that the Saturday Star's Washington bureau chief Daniel Dale ? the man who got considerable praise for counting Donald Trump's campaign lies, but deliberately not counting Hillary Clinton's lies ? offered readers the Democratic Party talking points claiming that Sessions, appointed as Trump's attorney general, is an ?alleged racist.?

Dale, going along with the bulk of the mainstream media in the U.S. ? most of which spent the campaign regurgitating anti-Trump stories while missing one of the most extraordinary political success stories in U.S. history ? tells us that the appointment of Sessions and two others ?are in line with Trump's campaign rhetoric, which was openly bigoted against Muslims and frequently insulting to the black community.?

Makes you wonder how Trump did better in both those communities than his two Republican predecessors as presidential candidates. But there you have it.

The ?Sessions-is-a-racist? story flows from a 1986 process where Ronald Reagan wanted him as a federal judge, but the Democrats ? led by the spiteful Ted Kennedy ? used a few questionable quotes from Sessions, which he basically denied, to show that he was, indeed, a racist.

In his story, of course, Dale dutifully reported the specious claims against Sessions, but failed to tell readers about Sessions' actual legal battles on behalf of African-Americans in Alabama. But then, why ruin the narrative? Kind of like adding up Hillary's lies as well, eh?

Back in 1981, African Americans had real reason to worry about being lynched or beaten or bombed, simply for the color of their skin. To be sure, there are still racial problems in the U.S., but it's absurd to compare today's climate with the 1980s and earlier when the Klan really was a terrible force to be reckoned with.

Yet you would think by reading much of the virulently anti-Trump media, that blacks ? along with Hispanics, women and other groups ? have good reason to cower in fear, afraid to emerge from their homes lest Trump and his hateful surrogates show up to do them real harm.

It is mostly the left-leaning media which now screams against ?false news? and demands ?truth? in reportage, yet at the same time cavalierly smears the reputation of anybody who associates himself or herself with Trump without bothering to look into the veracity of what should be a rather serious accusation against somebody.

Hence, the story that Sessions ? whose main crime was to tell a stupid joke involving the KKK and smoking weed ? is an out-and-out racist and has no place in a federal cabinet.

The other mainline story is that Trump's election is the result of a ?whitelash,? an race-based revolt of the blue collar white males raging against their perceived enemies in the nation's minority groups.

It is true that Trump got more white votes than he did Hispanic or black votes, but so did Clinton. That's because there are a lot more white voters out there. Duh!

It is also true ? although being generally ignored ? that Trump, supposedly a man who hates everybody who isn't a white male ? got 52 per cent of the white women's vote in the U.S. and just under 30 per cent of the non-white vote, better than his more moderate predecessors, Romney and McCain, did.

But then, why ruin a good vendetta with facts? That's not nearly as gripping as racism and victimhood.

